SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 1223 06235 9469

San Francisco

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MANAGEMENT AUDIT REPORT

of the

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY

Harvey M. Rose
Budget Analyst

Roy Hanson
Roger Mialocq
John O'Dowd
Associate Budget Analysts

September 17, 1973

D

REF
025.1974
Sa52m

5/S

San Francisco Public Library

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION CENTER
SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY
REFERENCE BOOK

Not to be taken from the Library

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
RECOMMENDATIONS	1
INTRODUCTION	4
ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT AND PERSONNEL	6
DEPARTMENTAL OPERATIONS	10
Main Library Open Hours	10
Branch Open Hours	12
Discarding of Books	13
Overdue Books	15
Physical Security	17

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Library Commission direct the City Librarian to:

1. Open the Main Library to the public on Sundays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. This can be accomplished by transferring 29 Librarian and clerical personnel from their Friday schedule to a Sunday schedule. Fridays would then be adequately staffed with the same number of Librarian and clerical personnel as on Monday which is a busier day than Friday. Further, the recommended Sunday Librarian and clerical staff would be equal to the present Saturday staff. New Sunday service to the public, as previously requested by the Library in its 1973-74 budget but disapproved by the Mayor, could then be effected without an increase in Librarian and clerical staff. This recommendation would require the employment of five additional maintenance personnel to support the Sunday staff as well as a transfer from weekdays to Sundays of supporting hours of Library page personnel.
2. Open the Neighborhood Branches to the public for an additional 63 hours per week, pursuant to the Library's May, 1973 detailed proposal, without providing for any increase in staff. The average Branch is closed to the public 13 hours per week while Librarians are on the payroll performing various responsibilities. The Management Audit Team found that Librarians generally

3 1223 06235 9469

had more time than was necessary to accomplish such non-public service responsibilities particularly since many of these duties could be accomplished during slack periods when the Branches were open to the public.

3. Request the Purchaser of Supplies, pursuant to Charter Section 7.100, to sell the Library books now being discarded as trash. In fiscal year 1972-73, the Library discarded approximately 50,600 books which were generally in good physical condition and at least equal in physical condition to the 44,000 books donated by private citizens to the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library for their 1973 annual book sale.

4. Prepare a weekly list of all overdue accounts of 30 days or more and distribute such lists to the Main Library, the Business Library and the 26 Neighborhood Branches. This list would prevent the checking out of additional books by citizens prior to their having returned previously checked-out overdue books. The Library has no timely control procedures to identify such citizens and in the past three fiscal years this has resulted in a loss of 108,246 books having a replacement value of approximately $673,290. Further, request one new position of Investigator, as previously requested but disapproved by the Mayor in the 1973-74 budget, to conduct field investigations of overdue accounts that

cannot be prevented through the preparation of the weekly list.

5. Strengthen the currently inadequate physical security of Library books as follows:

   (a) Direct the Main Library guards to comply with the Library's instruction of February 7, 1972 that all persons leaving the building at the front door exit are to be observed for books not properly checked out.

   (b) Install an approved fire lock at the McAllister Street and Science Department exits located at the Main Library and keep such exits locked during working hours.

   (c) Install shelving units which would serve as controlled exits at the 15 Branches specified on page 17 of this report in order to prevent citizens from bypassing the check-out desks with books not properly checked out.

It is estimated that nearly 36,000 books valued at approximately $223,000 are stolen annually from the Library.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2014

https://archive.org/details/managementauditr1719sanf

INTRODUCTION

The Library Department is headed by the Library Commission consisting of seven members appointed by the Mayor for a term of four years. The Commission sets policy and is responsible for the management of the Library.

The City Librarian, appointed by the Commission, is the Department's chief executive and is responsible for administering the affairs of the Library.

The basic function of the Library Department is to provide materials and services to meet the informational, educational and cultural needs of the citizens of San Francisco. This function is conducted at the Main Library, the Business Library, 26 Neighborhood Branches and from one mediamobile and one bookmobile.

The main legal authority for the Library's operations is based on Sections 3.560, 3.561 and 7.100 of the Charter of the City and County of San Francisco.

In fiscal year 1973-74, the Library has 299 permanent authorized personnel. In addition, the Library employs over 170 part-time employees. The total budgeted expenditures amounted to $5,604,394.including $1,026,523 for books, periodicals and other Library materials.

In conducting this Management Audit, employees and management personnel at all levels within the department were interviewed. The Library Commission, the City Librarian, and his entire staff cooperated fully.

The audit scope included interviews and telephone discussions with employees of other City and County Departments, officials in other Governmental Agencies and representatives in private firms.

It is estimated that this audit, the total cost of which amounted to $15,034, will result in increased annual revenues, reduced annual losses and additional annual public services valued at $419,000 upon the proper implementation of the audit recommendations.

ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT AND PERSONNEL

The Library Department is organized in accordance with the organization chart as shown on page 9.

The Secretary of the Library Commission, in addition to his Commission-related duties, is responsible for certain accounting, budgeting, purchasing, maintenance, custodial, elevator and security functions.

The City Librarian is responsible for the day to day administrative activities of the Library and the handling of the various official outside contacts. The incumbent City Librarian has announced his resignation effective September 24, 1973 to assume a comparable post in another jurisdiction. On August 8, 1973 the Library Commission named an Acting City Librarian to replace the City Librarian on the effective date of his resignation.

The Assistant City Librarian has administrative responsibility for the Main Library, the Business Branch, the Technical Services Division, the Coordinator of Children's Services and the Coordinator of Adult Services.

The Administrative Office performs various administrative duties and some budget preparation work for the City Librarian.

The Main Library which contains over 809,000 books is organized into seven subject departments and a general reference department which are open to the public Monday through Saturday for a total of 69 hours per week. In addition, there are 26 Neighborhood Branches and one Business Library which in total contain over 624,000 books. Six of the larger Branch libraries serve as

regional centers and back-up the cluster of Branch libraries which surround them. The book collections and operating hours in the Branches vary by location, staffing pattern and community needs.

The Technical Services Division's responsibilities include the book ordering, cataloging and processing services for the Main Library, Business Library and the Branches.

The Coordinator of Children's Services and the Coordinator of Adult Services provide the professional direction to media selection, in-service training, programming and assistance in the selection and placement of personnel.

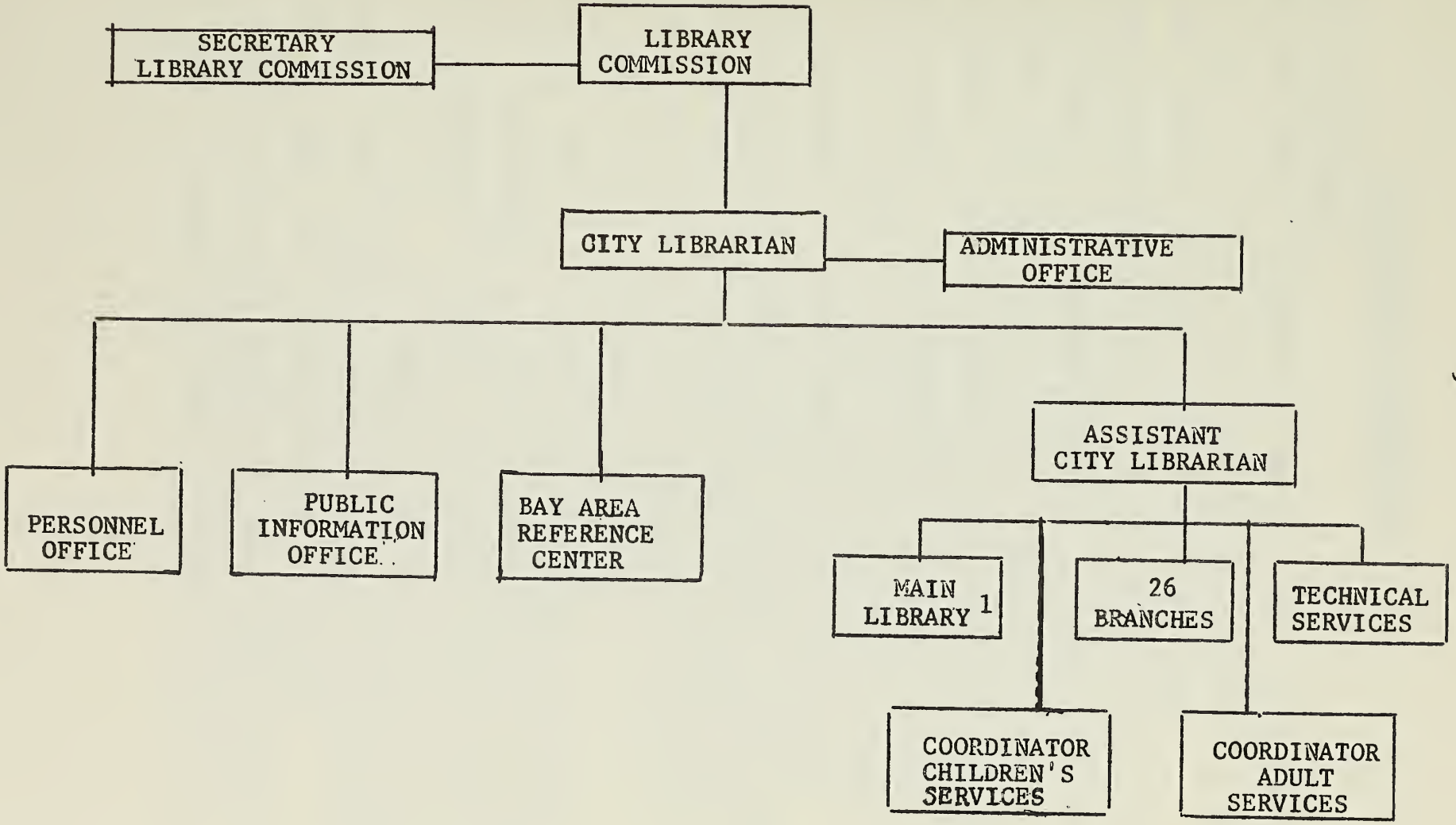
The Personnel Division is responsible for payroll, recruitment and other personnel related functions. The Public Information Division is responsible for the public relations duties of the Department.

The Bay Area Reference Center (BARC), a federally-funded project, provides, through telecommunications, reference and research services to other library systems in Central and Northern California as well as providing service to San Francisco residents. As testimony to BARC's outstanding work, its publication on reference work entitled Synergy won the National Award for the best library publication in 1970 and 1972. Federal funds for BARC are scheduled to terminate on June 30, 1974.

Although not indicated on the organization chart, the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library are supportive of various Library activities.

While management and employees are generally doing an excellent job in the Library services being performed, such services can and should be expanded with existing staff. Further, some of the procedures must be improved in order to make the Library a more effective and economical operation.

ORGANIZATION CHART



[1]Business Library is included within this organizational unit.

DEPARTMENTAL OPERATIONS

Main Library Open Hours

The Main Library is open to the public Monday through Friday from the hours of 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. for a total of 69 public service hours per week.

During the Management Audit, all of the Main Library's seven subject departments, the General Reference department and the administrative departments were visited. Based on interviews with Librarians, as well as observations and analysis of Library circulation records, it was determined that the least busiest day for Librarians is Friday in terms of public inquiries, usage of books at the Library and books checked out from the Library. Further, the Librarians perform no more non-public service duties such as book selection and attending meetings on Fridays than on other days. The Library assigns 78 Librarians and supporting personnel to staff the Main Library on Fridays.

On Monday, which is a busier day than Friday, the Library assigns only 49 personnel to staff the Main Library or 29 employees less than are employed on Friday. On Saturday, which is also a busier day than Friday, the Library assigns 29 personnel at the Main Library. These personnel perform non-public service duties in addition to their public service duties on Saturday.

An analysis of the Main Library records of books checked out and the number of assigned personnel by the day of the week is as follows:

	Percentage of Daily Number of Books Checked Out to Weekly Total	Number of Librarians and Clerical Personnel Assigned at Main Library
Monday	15.2	49
Tuesday	16.2	78
Wednesday	24.6	78
Thursday	14.3	78
Friday	12.0	78
Saturday	17.7	29
	100.0	

The Library's 1973-74 budget contained a request, which was disapproved by the Mayor, for staff and related expenses in order that the Main Library could be open to the public on Sundays. The budget request stated, "We expect heavy usage."

Based on the above facts, it is apparent that 29 of the 78 Librarian and clerical personnel working on Fridays could be transferred to a Sunday schedule. This would provide the Main Library with a Sunday staff equal to its Saturday staff and a Friday staff equal to its Monday staff. Five maintenance personnel, including 1 Watchman, 2 Janitors, 1 Engineer and 1 Elevator Operator must be added to the Sunday staff at an increased annual cost of $14,000. Further, a transfer from weekdays to Sundays of supporting hours of Library page personnel would be necessary and can be effected.

In order to provide additional public service hours without any increase in Librarian and clerical staff, the Main Library should be open to the public on Sundays. This is the subject of Recommendation No. 1. It is estimated that the implementation of this recommendation will result in net additional annual public services valued at $85,000.

Branch Open Hours

Although most Librarians at the 26 Neighborhood Branches located throughout the City work and are paid for 40 hours each week, the average Branch is closed to the public approximately 13 hours per week when staff is on duty. During these 13 hours, Librarians perform duties such as book selection and attending meetings either at their assigned Branch or at other locations.

In the course of the management audit, all of the Branches were visited during working hours when the Library was both closed and open to the public. Based on observations, detailed interviews with Librarians and an analysis of Library records, it was apparent that while the Library was closed to the public, the Librarians generally had more time than was necessary to accomplish their various responsibilities. Further, it was apparent that much of the Librarians' work that was being accomplished while the Branches were closed to the public could readily be accomplished during slack periods when the Branches were open to the public.

Sixty-four percent of the Librarians interviewed stated that they did not need the entire 13 hours per week, when the Library is closed to the public, to accomplish their various non-public service duties since some of these duties could be accomplished while the Library was open to the public. Therefore, these Librarians concurred that many of the Branches could be open more hours to the public without any increase in staff. Their comments were concurred in by the City Librarian, the Assistant City Librarian and the Chief Librarian of the Branches.

In a May, 1973 detailed analysis by the Library of the Branch working hours, it was recommended that a net additional 63 hours per week open to the public, affecting 24 Branches, could be provided by the Library without increasing the existing Library staff. A Library report stated that such additional open hours will result in "...improved services for the public without diminishing the quality of that service."

An independent analysis by the Management Audit Team concluded that 115 additional hours per week could be open to the public without any increase in staff or 52 weekly hours in excess of the Library proposal.

An increase in the Neighborhood Branch hours open to the public will provide additional Library service throughout the City. The May, 1973 Library proposal to provide 63 more weekly hours is a reasonable proposal and can be effected without any increase in staff. This is the subject of Recommendation No. 2. It is estimated that the implementation of this recommendation will result in additional annual public services valued at $87,000 with no resulting increase in staff costs.

Discarding of Books

Librarians are continuously removing books from the Main Library, the Business Library and the 26 Neighborhood Branches for various reasons. These reasons include the individual Librarian's judgment as to the poor physical condition, obsolescense or limited circulation of the books. As books are continuously withdrawn from the Library system they are replaced with

new purchases which are added to the system.

While some of the withdrawn books are re-used or maintained at the Main Library and others are given away to worthy organizations, the great majority of these books are discarded as trash. The estimated number of books discarded in fiscal year 1972-73 was 50,600.

An inspection of Library books designated to be discarded disclosed that, in general, the physical condition of these books is good and at least equal in physical condition to the books donated by private citizens to the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library. These privately donated books are sold by the Friends at their annual book sale.

The Friends sold approximately 44,000 books during their 1973 book sale which realized gross receipts of $17,677. On an annual basis, the Library is discarding its own books as trash at a faster rate than the Friends are selling comparable books donated by private citizens.

Charter Section 7.100 authorizes the sale, through the Purchaser of Supplies, of the books now being discarded by the Library. In order to realize cash proceeds from the books now being discarded by the Library, these books should be sold. This is the subject of Recommendation No. 3. It is estimated that the implementation of this recommendation will result in increased annual revenues of at least $20,000.

Overdue Books

From fiscal year 1970-71 through 1972-73, 108,246 Library books were checked out by citizens and never returned to the Library. These overdue books represent a loss of approximately $673,290. In just fiscal year 1972-73, the loss for 44,364 overdue books amounted to $275,944 of which only $6,958 or approximately 2.5% was recovered. It is estimated that 30% of the unreturned overdue books are repurchased by the Library, thereby directly increasing ad valorem taxes.

When books are overdue, the Library notifies citizens at various times to return such books. For those overdue accounts which do not exceed $40 in retail value and which represent 81% of the replacement value of all of the overdue books, the Library makes no subsequent follow-up to recover the books from citizens. For those accounts overdue by 90 days or more which exceed $40 and which represent 19% of all overdue books, the Library transfers such accounts to the Tax Collector's Bureau of Delinquent Revenue which makes some further collection efforts. The Library transferred only $51,377 out of the $275,944 of unreturned overdue books in fiscal year 1972-73 and the Bureau of Delinquent Revenue recovered only $6,958 or approximately 14% of such accounts.

Library cards are issued to citizens for three-year periods. If citizens present valid cards to the Library for the purpose of checking out books, the Library has no timely control procedures to identify those citizens who have previously checked out books

which became overdue and were never returned to the Library. Subsequent to various notifications, the Library relies completely on the honesty of citizens to return overdue books prior to checking out new books.

Some examples of individual citizen overdue accounts exceeding $500 and representing books checked out and never returned as of 8/24/73 are as follows:

Account	Replacement Value	Dates Books Checked Out
A	$ 1,907	7/69 - 11/69
B	653	7/72 - 6/73
C	518	12/70 - 4/73
D	512	3/68 - 4/68
E	505	11/70 - 8/72

Timely control procedures must be established to prevent the excessive losses which occur from unreturned overdue Library books. Such losses currently represent 26% of the annual Library book and materials budget. A weekly list of all overdue accounts of 30 days or more should be prepared and made available to the Main Library, the Business Library and the 26 Neighborhood Branches. This list, which can be prepared and scanned by existing personnel, should be compared to citizens' Library cards in order to prevent the checking out of additional books by citizens who have not returned their previously checked-out overdue books. Since approximately 35% of the unreturned overdue accounts are repeaters, the weekly list would effectively control losses from such accounts. Further, one Investigator, as requested in the 1973-74 budget but which was disapproved by the Mayor, should be employed

for the purpose of making field investigations relating to overdue accounts that cannot be prevented by the establishment of timely control procedures. These matters are the subject of Recommendation No. 4. It is estimated that the implementation of this recommendation will result in reduced net annual losses of $116,000.

As a result of the identification of this finding by the Management Audit Team, the Library has started preparation of a list of all citizens who, according to the Library records, are holding overdue books since the latter part of 1970 and who have never returned such books to the Library.

Physical Security

Physical security of books at both the Main Library and at 15 of the Branches is inadequate.

At the Main Library, while guards are stationed at the front door exit, in many instances they make no efforts to comply with the February 7, 1972 Library instruction that "All persons leaving the building are to be observed and checked for books." Further, the McAllister Street and Science Department exits remain unlocked and unguarded during working hours.

At the Chinatown, Eureka Valley, Excelsior, Marina, Merced, Mission, Noe Valley, Ortega, Parkside, Potrero, Presidio, Richmond, Sunset, Visitacion Valley and Western Addition Branches, it was observed that citizens with Library books could easily bypass the check-out desks without being observed. These Branches lack adequate controlled exits.

As of June 30, 1973, the number of books and materials in the total Library collection was 1,434,043. Based on physical inventories taken during the Management Audit and available recorded inventory records, it is estimated that 35,851 Library books valued at $222,993 are stolen annually.

In order to strengthen the physical security, all persons leaving the Main Library should be observed by the Library guards for books not properly checked out. The doors at the McAllister Street and Science Department exits should be locked during working hours with approved fire locks costing an estimated $300. Further, shelving units at an estimated cost of $24,000 which would serve as controlled exits, should be installed at the 15 Branches cited above. These matters are the subject of Recommendation No. 5. It is estimated that the implementation of this recommendation will result in reduced annual losses from stolen books of $111,000.